

fire alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns.'

"Ganaka Vaideha said: 'When the sun has set, O Yagnavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire is gone out, what then is the light of man?'

"Yagnavalkya replied: 'Sound indeed is his light; for, having sound alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns. Therefore, O King, when one cannot see even one's own hand, yet when a sound is raised, one goes toward it.'

"Ganaka Vaideha said: 'So indeed it is. O Yagnavalkya.'

"Ganaka Vaideha said: 'When the sun has set, O Yagnavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire out, and the sound hushed, what is then the light of man?'

"Yagnavalkya said: 'The Self indeed is his light; for, having the Self alone as his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns.'

"Ganaka Vaideha said: 'Who is that Self?'"

Let us answer him out of the Khandogya Upanishad:

"That Self is a bank, a boundary, so that these worlds may not be confounded. Day and night do not pass that bank, nor old age, death and grief; neither good nor evil deeds. All evil-doers turn back from it, for the world of Brahman is free from all evil.

"Therefore he who has crossed that bank, if blind, ceases to be blind; if wounded, ceases to be wounded; if afflicted, ceases to be afflicted. Therefore, when that bank has been crossed, night becomes day indeed, for the world of Brahman is lighted up once for all."

Note: (The quotations in this article are from the translation of the chief Upanishads by Prof. Max Müller, issued by the Oxford Press.)

## THE UPANISHADS.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE Upanishads form perhaps the most classical book of religious literature in the world, and no one who has not studied their problem can really claim to have understood the central proposition of religious thought. Mr. Paul W. Cotton presents to us the beauty of the Upanishads with an enthusiasm that naturally seizes a man who grasps their underlying idea for the first time. Chris-

tianity has nothing like it, as Mr. Cotton points out, and so the very kernel of religion, a treatment of the nature of the soul, is lacking in the most important and most powerful religion that is now spreading over all the world. In fact if Christianity wants to fathom the problem of the soul in its philosophical significance its thinkers will have to go back to India, where this subject has been attacked in the most systematic way and is well presented in both its affirmative and its negative aspect. The former, presented in the Upanishads, is best formulated by the Hindu sage Shankāra-carya, the latter by Gautama, the Shakya sage, who on having solved the world problem claims the title of the Enlightened One, the Buddha.

The question is the same as the problem of unity, a problem which was also raised by the Greek sages and received a special treatment by Plato. It is the same question which was treated by Kant in his problem of the thing-in-itself and his solution was similar to that of the Upanishads, that the thing-in-itself is unknown and unknowable—a solution which led some of the followers of Kant to say boldly that the thing-in-itself does not exist. This interpretation of Kantism agrees exactly with the view of Buddha who came to the conclusion that the self is non-existent.

Further I would say that science reaches the same conclusion, and modern psychology is for that reason called the psychology without a soul. Mr. Cotton thinks in his enthusiasm for the Upanishad theory that science upholds it and proves it, but the fact is that the theory of the self as an independent entity is mystical and absolutely untenable. The old Brahman conception of the soul is an illusion, while the Buddhist view is an anticipation of a truly scientific conception.

The difficulty may be reduced to simple terms. To use the Kantian method, we are puzzled in the face of all things with which we are confronted by the question, "What is the thing-in-itself?" We see a tree. It consists of roots, trunk, branches and foliage. The whole of the tree is a combination of all its parts, and these parts cooperate among themselves. Is there a tree in itself independent of its parts, or is the cooperation and combination of its parts the tree? Science does not uphold the idea that there is a tree in itself, that this tree in itself is a mystical and spiritual entity, a thing which is eternal and everlasting, world without end, that has never originated and will never pass away.

In a certain sense there is a tree in itself, and it exists, but not as an entity. The tree in itself is a possibility. It has existed as

a pure form in itself. It is the Platonic idea of a tree, and this idea of a tree is not a concrete existence, but a mathematical possibility. In this sense the realm of ideas is eternal and everlasting. It has never originated. It exists in potential combinations, and such possibilities are as eternal and everlasting as the truths of mathematics. Briefly, there are no things-in-themselves but there are forms-in-themselves.

In mathematics the triangle is a definite combination of three lines and there are many possible triangles. There is the right-angled triangle, the obtuse-angled triangle and the acute-angled triangle, with all possible combinations of angles and lines. The rules about the triangles, the results of definite combinations of lines, are studied in geometry and trigonometry. What we study in mathematics is not concrete definite material objects but possible combinations—pure forms, and these combinations can be realized in the actual world.

The same is true of other forms such as conic sections, which are actualized in astronomy. The astronomer can calculate the courses of planets and satellites. He can predict the position of a star from to-day to to-morrow and the night after to-morrow. The laws of mathematics are absolute and reliable and the same is true of all forms.

In the domain of living beings we find combinations originate as specks of living substance, and our physiology regards them as combinations just as crystals or non-living matter form combinations. We see that the cooperation of parts produces new and higher units. These units originate and decay. They pass away as soon as the cooperation stops. Buddha has pronounced the rule that all combinations which originate through cooperation of parts originate and pass away. They combine not in order to be animated by a thing-in-itself that is incarnated in them, but their cooperation is the reality which produces the union. Here the Brahman philosophy steps in and says, "the union of these parts is the real thing." It is, to use Kant's expression, the thing-in-itself, or as the Brahman says, the self or the *atman*.

The truth of cooperation producing new things is also visible in the work of human activity. A wagon is constructed by fitting four wheels on axles, by further putting a box on the axles and in front of it a tongue for furnishing a place to hitch the horses. The whole is a wagon, or, as the Buddhist philosopher in "The Questions of King Milinda" sets forth, it produces a new unit which exists although there is no wagon in itself.

The same is true of modern inventions where the cooperation is more visible such as a steam engine or a watch. There is no steam engine in itself but the cooperation of its parts makes it do work by producing a unit fit for some definite purpose.

The watchmaker does not take a watch in itself and fit it with bodily parts; but the parts of a watch, its wheels and its cogs, its dial and hands, are put together, and as soon as the spring is wound and placed in its right position the watch runs and indicates the time. To believe in a watch in itself would be silly, and there is no reason whatever to think that any living being is an atman or a thing-in-itself, which only uses its members for performing some work.

Buddhism denies the existence of a thing-in-itself, of an atman, of a self, but does not deny the importance of the cooperating whole which the parts of a thing produce. The unit produced in this way in a human body is the soul, and this soul consists in the function or, to use the Buddhist term, in the *karma* which it performs. Karma is transferable by inheritance and education, and it is the kind of karma a man does which characterizes him, and the realization which human beings try to accomplish is the essential portion of a man. In this sense Buddhism finds its application in the moral sphere of active life, while according to Vedantic Brahmanism the deeds of a man do not touch him but pass by and are of transient significance. The immortal soul remains what it is and has been through all eternity, a kind of small god who mysteriously has arisen out of the unknown depths of being and will continue to exist without let or hindrance. Buddhism, on the contrary, insists on the significance of deeds. What a man does he is. He changes his existence by changing his works. He lives in his works, and his works are himself. There is an atman or self, but this atman is a temporary cooperation of the parts of which the man exists, the interaction of his thoughts, the doing of his deeds and the purpose which he pursues. There is no atman that exists independently without his personality.

There is no need here to point out all the distinctions between Buddhism in its theory of the *anatman* and Vedantic Brahmanism in its trust in an eternal atman or a metaphysical thing-in-itself independent of a man's personality. We have discussed this problem again and again in *The Open Court* and in other publications. We will only say here in connection with the publication of Mr. Cotton's article that the imposing beauty of the atman theory preached in the Upanishads is an illusion which has fascinated

some of our best philosophers in India as well as in the Occidental world. We believe that the problem ought to be weighed and considered, but we trust that any clear-headed thinker will reject the theory. It is a question of either there is a thing-in-itself or there is not, *tertium non datur*. And in this dilemma we see no other solution than the Buddhist conception of the theory of the soul.

## BEETHOVEN'S NINTH SYMPHONY.<sup>1</sup>

BY BARON VON DER PFORDTEN.

CLOSE to Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*<sup>2</sup> in miraculous power stands another of his works, the Ninth Symphony in D minor, Op. 125, known briefly as the "Ninth." There is hardly another composition about which there has been so much controversy as about this one. There is a superabundance of literature dealing with the subject, and the layman is almost submerged in the flood of attempts at its elucidation. The most serious feature is that the opinion is thus spread abroad again and again that the Ninth Symphony is quite peculiar, and if comprehensible at all can be understood only by the aid of complicated explanations. For this reason I shall here attempt to simplify its exposition as much as possible. Our course shall lead, as always, from the outside inward, from the external form to the content of the symphony.

It has been authentically proved that ever since the year 1793 Beethoven had it in mind to elaborate the theme of Schiller's well-known "Hymn to Joy." To all appearances he was so persistently affected by this hymn that he could not get away from it. Nevertheless, thirty years went by before the plan was consummated, and indeed quite differently from the way originally sketched. For instance, Beethoven's first idea had been to set the whole poem to music. It would then have become a cantata arranged for solo voices, chorus and orchestra, and at all events we would have had a magnificent work in it; scruples with regard to style would hardly have been aroused. It could then have been a matter only of feeling Beethoven's conception with him and comprehending from it his arrangement into form, just as with all his creations. But now he surprises us with something quite unexpected. He puts separate

<sup>1</sup> Translated from the German by Lydia G. Robinson.

<sup>2</sup> For Baron von der Pfordten's appreciative analysis of this remarkable composition see *The Open Court* for September, 1910.